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ABSTRACT

The reflexive turn in qualitative research has transformed the process of doing life history research. No longer are research subjects examined through the lens of the all-knowing but supposedly invisible researcher. According to this book, an introduction to conducting life history research, the process is now one of mutuality, empathy, sensitivity, and caring. The book carries the novice researcher through the steps of conducting life history research from conceptualizing the project to the various means of presenting results with an eye toward understanding the complex relationship between participant and researcher and how that shapes the project. The book is in two parts, each representing a different kind of text. Part 1 contains the editors' words and ideas supplemented by voices of other scholars. It presents, discusses, and illustrates a perspective on life history research that is based on principles of reflexivity, relationality, and artistry; i.e., the theoretical elements of the research orientation are made known. Part 2 contains essays by a variety of life history researchers, such as Renee Sarchuk Will, Jacquie Aston, Kathleen Gates, Kathryn Church, Cathy Crowe, Avi Rose, James A. Muchmore, Lori Ebbesen, Jeff Orr, Elizabeth Oates Schuster, Suzanne Thomas, Maura McIntyre, and Ilze Arielle Matiss. These essays present perspectives and ideas about life history research that have application in a wide variety of inquiry contexts and academic disciplines. The book is intended both for teaching life history research to students and as a reference for qualitative researchers. (BT)

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